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NO SECT IN HEAVEN

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NO SECT IN HEAVEN.

TALKING of sects till late one eve,
Of the various doctrines the saints believe,
That night I stood in a troubled dream,
By the side of a darkly flowing stream.

And a "Churchman" down to the river came:
When I heard a strange voice call his name,
"Good father, stop; when you cross this tide,
You must leave your robes on the other side."

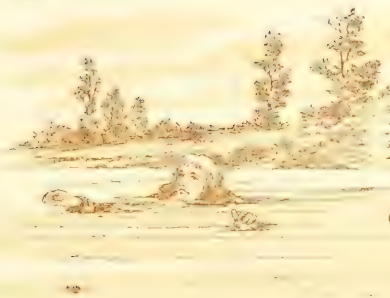
But the aged father did not mind,
And his long gown floated out behind,
As down to the stream his way he took,
His pale hands clasping a gilt-edged book.

"I'm bound for heaven, and when I'm
there,
I shall want my book of
Common Prayer;
And though I put on a starry
crown,
I should feel quite lost without
my gown."

Then he fixed his eye on the
shining track,
But his gown was heavy, and held
him back,
And the poor old father tried in
vain,
A single step in the flood to
gain.

I saw him again on the other
side,
But his silk gown floated on the
tide;
And no one asked in that bliss-
ful spot,
Whether he belonged to "the
Church" or not.

Then down to the river a Quaker
strayed,
His dress of a sober hue was
made;
"My coat and hat must be all of
gray,
I cannot go any other way."



Then he buttoned his coat straight
up to his chin
And staidly, solemnly, waded in,
And his broad-brimmed hat he
pulled down tight
Over his forehead, so cold and
white.

But a strong wind carried away
his hat;
A moment he silently sighed over
that,
And then, as he gazed to the
farther shore,
The coat slipped off, and was
seen no more.

As he entered heaven, his suit
of gray
Went quietly sailing—away—away
And none of the angels questioned him
About the width of his beaver's brim.

Next came Dr. Watts with a bundle of Psalms
Tied nicely up in his aged arms,
And hymns as many, a very wise thing,
That the people in heaven, "all round" might sing.

But I thought that he heaved an
anxious sigh,
As he saw that the river ran broad
and high,
And looked rather surprised, as,
one by one,
The Psalms and Hymns in the
waves went down.

And after him, with his MSS.,
Came Wesley, the pattern of
godliness.
But he cried, "Dear me, what shall
I do?
The water has soaked them
through and
through."

And there on the river, far and
wide,
Away they went down the swol-
len tide,
And the saint astonished, passed
through alone,
Without his manuscripts, up to
the throne.

Then gravely walking, two saints
by name,
Down to the stream together
came,
But as they stopped at the river's
brink,
I saw one saint from the other
shrink.

"Sprinkled or plunged, may I ask you, friend,
How you attained to life's great end?"
"Thus, with a few drops on my brow."
"But I have been dipped, as you'll see me now;

And I really think it will hardly do,
As I'm 'close communion,' to cross with you;
You're bound, I know, to the realms of bliss,
But you must go that way, and I'll go this."

Then straightway plunging with all his might,
Away to the left – his friend at the right,
Apart they went from this world
of sin,
But at last together they entered in.

And now, when the river was rolling on,
A Presbyterian church went down;
Of women there seemed an innumerable
throng,
But the men I could count as they pass
ed along;

And concerning the road, they could
never agree,
The <u>old</u> or the <u>new</u> way, which it
could be,

Nor ever a moment paused to think
That both would lead to the river's brink.

And a sound of murmuring long and loud
Came ever up from the moving crowd,
"You're in the old way, and I'm in the new,
That is the false, and this is the true."—
Or, "I'm in the old way, and you're in the new,
That is the false, and this is the true."

But the brethren only seemed to speak,

Modest the sisters walked, and meek,
And if ever one of them chanced to say
What troubles she met with on the way,
How she longed to pass to the
other side,
Nor feared to cross over the swell-
ing tide,
A voice arose from the brethren
then:
"Let no one speak but the 'holy
men;'
For have ye not heard the words
of Paul,
'Oh, let the women keep silence all!'"

I watched them long in my curious
dream,

Till they stood by the borders of the stream.
Then, just as I thought, the two ways met,
But all the brethren were talking yet,
And would talk on, till the heaving tide
Carried them over, side by side;
Side by side, for the way was one,
The toilsome journey of life was done,
And all who in Christ the Savior died,
Came out alike on the other side.
No forms, or crosses, or books had they,
No gowns of silk, or suits of gray,
No creeds to guide them, or MSS.,
For all had put on Christ's righteousness.

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